

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)

18	Elementary schools (includes K-8)
4	Middle/Junior high schools
4	High schools
0	K-12 schools
26	TOTAL

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 10978

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- ☐ Urban or large central city
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
☒ Suburban
☐ Small city or town in a rural area
☐ Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0	6	0	0	0
K	34	25	59	7	0	0	0
1	32	59	91	8	0	0	0
2	40	36	76	9	0	0	0
3	27	41	68	10	0	0	0
4	47	43	90	11	0	0	0
5	54	46	100	12	0	0	0
			TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL				484

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
5 % Asian
32 % Black or African American
20 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
43 % White
0 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 11 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	22
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	30
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	52
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	484
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.107
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	10.744

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 10 %

Total number limited English proficient 50

Number of languages represented: 8

Specify languages:

Spanish (40), Hindi (2), Turkish (1), Urdu (1), Gujarati (1), Chinese (2), Telugu (2), Not Specified (1)

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 62 %

Total number students who qualify: 298

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 10 %

Total Number of Students Served: 50

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u> </u> Autism	<u> </u> 1 Orthopedic Impairment
<u> </u> Deafness	<u> </u> 10 Other Health Impaired
<u> </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u> </u> 25 Specific Learning Disability
<u> </u> 1 Emotional Disturbance	<u> </u> 8 Speech or Language Impairment
<u> </u> 1 Hearing Impairment	<u> </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u> </u> 2 Mental Retardation	<u> </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u> </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u> </u> 2 Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u> </u> 1	<u> </u> 0
Classroom teachers	<u> </u> 20	<u> </u> 0
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u> </u> 11	<u> </u> 12
Paraprofessionals	<u> </u> 2	<u> </u> 0
Support staff	<u> </u> 7	<u> </u> 0
Total number	<u> </u> 41	<u> </u> 12

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 24 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%
Teacher turnover rate	23%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Student dropout rate	%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

The Teacher Turnover rates for years prior to the 2007/2008 school year are unavailable from our District Office.

There was a higher than normal rate of Teacher Turnover for the 2008/2009 school year due to redistricting. Our school enrollment dropped significantly causing many teachers to be moved to other schools.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total		%

PART III - SUMMARY

Robert S. Gallaher Elementary School is located in suburban Newark, Delaware. It is a neighborhood school serving modest residential developments and several extensive apartment complexes. The school was built in 1959, closed for a short period in the 1970s and was remodeled in mid-2000. Gallaher is now a K – 5 school. There are 26 classrooms, a library, a gymnasium and a cafetorium. Gallaher is one of seventeen elementary schools in the Christina School District and has been rated a Superior school since the inception of the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP). Gallaher is also a Distinguished Title I School with 48% of its students eligible for Free Lunch. Gallaher's strength is its diversity. Its 486 students represent most races (5% Asian, 32% Black or African American, 20% Hispanic or Latino and 43% White) and 20% have chosen to attend Gallaher instead of their feeder school.

The staff at Gallaher in partnership with the community is committed to educating a diverse group of learners in a changing society. We challenge our students academically and provide opportunities for creative expression. We reinforce social responsibility and nurture healthy behaviors. Because our staff has high expectations for all learners, we have successfully eliminated the achievement gap. A 2003 study by the U. S. Department of Education identified five specific practices in instruction that are critical to raising achievement and reducing the achievement gap. They are:

1. Systematic Implementation of Previewing for all “Extra-Help” students in grade-level subjects and courses
2. School-Wide Instructional Planning Model Based on Learning
3. Reading Comprehension Focus K-12 in All Subjects and Courses
4. District-Wide Writing Across All Subjects
5. Differentiated Assignments with Choice

Gallaher teachers consistently utilize these five specific practices. In addition, we have a group of retired teachers who have chosen to return and provide reading support which is interwoven in the 120-minute reading block of our daily schedule.

Gallaher has a history of strong community involvement. Unique to Gallaher is its tradition of parent-teacher collaboration which fosters a sense of family throughout the school. Parents are viewed as partners in education and are encouraged to be involved in a variety of ways. Of course, parents are welcomed at such events as meet the teachers, open house and parent-teacher conferences, but it goes beyond this. One of our parents, Jill Custer, stated that “the teachers at Gallaher are approachable – there's no hierarchy – and they really understand my children. I truly feel like an equal partner.” She further clarified that she has always been able to discuss any issue with any of her children's teachers. Teachers regularly communicate with parents via e-mail, newsletters and “positive parent postcards.” Gallaher is a PBS (Positive Behavior Support) school and has received the STAR school award. Key to the success of this teacher-led program is the involvement of the PTA. There is a PTA representative on the PBS Core Team and monthly celebrations would not be possible without the PTA's financial and volunteer support. In addition, the PTA supports the students achieving academic success. For example, the monthly Author's Luncheon and quarterly RIF book distributions are PTA-sponsored. Some other examples of community involvement include the Junior Achievement program, a partnership with Horace Mann Insurance (perfect attendance awards) and a joint venture with a local University of Delaware's fraternity (annual food drives). These are many of the reasons why parents choose to send their children to Gallaher.

Gallaher recently recognized 50 years in education and the community with a 50th anniversary celebration. This event reunited former educators, students and parents to celebrate Gallaher's past and continuing success. It was a testament to the strength of the school's impact upon the community throughout the past five decades.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. Assessment Results:

Robert S. Gallaher Elementary School participates in the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP). Students in grades 2-5 take the reading and mathematics portions of the test in the Spring of every year. Students in grade 4 take the science and social studies portions every fall, which covers material learned in grades K-3. In the past, students also participated in the writing assessment for grades 3-5 which has been eliminated in recent years. All the content area tests assess the students using multiple choice, short answer, and extended response. This is converted to a scale score. The Delaware Department of Education determines cut scores for the following performance levels: PL 5 (Distinguished), PL 4 (Exceeds Standard), PL 3 (Meets Standard), PL 2 (Approaching Standard), and PL 1 (Well Below Standard). It is possible to get a PL 0 if the test is non-scorable, illegible, or the student refused to take the test. More information regarding the state assessment can be found at <http://www.doe.k12.de.us/aab>.

Overall, Gallaher School has shown continual and consistent growth since 2004 to where we have at least 90% of students meeting or exceeding standards and 90% within each cell group meeting or exceeding standards in Reading. This demonstrates a lack of an achievement gap in which Gallaher was recognized as a National Distinguished Title I school during the 2008-2009 school year. Our goal is to have all students meet the standards with a large percentage of the children exceeding the standards. For example, our fifth grade has, for the past two years, had 100% of all students across all cell groups meet or exceed the standard in Reading. This pattern is also evident in the 2nd and 3rd grades with 94% and 95% respectively meeting or exceeding the standard in Reading. The data trends also show that 55% of third grade students not only met, but exceeded the standards in Reading. In fifth grade, 71% of students not only met, but exceeded the standards in Reading. Fifty percent of third grade students moved up at least one performance level on the Spring 2009 Reading DSTP from their performance level on the Spring 2008 Reading DSTP. In addition, 38% of fifth grade students improved their Spring 2009 Reading performance level from their Spring 2008 Reading performance levels. Looking at the fourth grade Reading data, there are inconsistencies in the scores, trending from 85% up to 94% and back down the following two years. These issues are being addressed through professional development in reading, staffing changes, and more rigorous reading intervention programs for students. The expectation is that there will be an increase in these scores on the Spring 2010 Reading DSTP. In Math, 64% of second grade students who met the standards did so with a PL 4 or PL 5. In addition, 53% of students in third grade who met the standards did so with a PL 4 or PL 5. In fourth grade, 43% of students who met the Math standards did so with a PL 4 or PL 5. Finally, 51% of fifth grade students who met the Math standards did so with a PL 4 or PL 5.

Gallaher's success can be attributed to many factors. However, one of the most critical indicators for success is our strong Early Childhood program. Our Kindergarten and first grade teachers focus on decoding, fluency, and comprehension. There are also consistent and uniform writing standards across all grade levels, especially in the K/1 cluster. This is demonstrated by our solid DIBELS scores. In Kindergarten, 92% of students met the benchmark and 87% of first grade students met the benchmark by Spring 2009. Finally, our special education students are exposed to the regular curriculum through the use of the co-teaching model. This is a model in which a special education and regular education teacher work in tandem to teach and support all students in Language Arts and Mathematics. Gallaher looks forward to continuous improvement for many years to come.

2. Using Assessment Results:

Robert S. Gallaher School uses assessment data in a variety of ways to help monitor and improve student achievement, professional development, and fidelity to the curriculum. First, grade level teachers meet weekly in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to collaboratively plan and design common assessments based

upon the state standards and district curriculum. They also discuss various types of assessment data such as DIBELS, MAP, DSTP, and criterion-referenced assessments. Classroom teachers and reading intervention specialists progress monitor student achievement weekly. Every six weeks, grade level teachers meet to discuss and review this data and make decisions. For example, this is how we flex-group students within the classroom. The progress monitoring data also determines what Tier of reading intervention support a student needs. Ultimately, this data also can lead to a request for a psycho-educational evaluation. Using various forms of data during weekly PLC meetings, allows teachers to target specific skills and deficits. For example, all classroom teachers give the spelling inventory three times a year. A first grade teacher will use this data to target specific decoding deficits in word families, consonant blends, and vowel digraphs.

By progress monitoring weekly and using multiple measures for evaluation we are able to help the whole child. One example of this would be our reduced number of referrals and qualifying students for special education services. This has gone down from approximately 40 referrals in school year 2007-2008 to 10 referrals in school year 2009-2010. In the past two years, we have qualified 5 students for special education services. This is because we are able to pinpoint areas of need by examining the progress monitoring data and focusing instruction on closing the grade level gap.

Finally, many of our staff development trainings are a direct result of assessment data. Based upon patterns in the data, the administration, in collaboration with the grade level chairs, provides pertinent staff development opportunities that focus on research based best teaching practices in instruction. By using assessment data systematically in decision making process, Gallaher has been able to consistently improve teaching and student learning.

3. Communicating Assessment Results:

At Gallaher, communicating data to parents and the greater community is an essential part of the School Success Plan. Assessment results are displayed prominently throughout the school and disseminated throughout the community. Upon entering the school, visitors are greeted by a large, bright bulletin board displaying graphs, charts, and summaries about Gallaher's DSTP and DIBELS data. A data summary is mailed to the parents in the Welcome Back letter and in the September issue of the Panther Press monthly newsletter. Parents can also find the results on the school's at <http://www.christina.k12.de.us/gallaher>. Assessment results are discussed at PTA meetings, Open Houses, and parent conferences. In addition, the administration goes out into the community through Civic and Homeowners Associations to share our school's successes and assessment data. The students are also familiar with their assessment results and have ownership of them. Gallaher uses these assessment results to celebrate students. This is done at trimester awards ceremonies at which parents are encouraged to attend. Students are recognized for their success in the classroom (i.e.—“Most Improved in Reading”). Teachers frequently communicate student performance to families through our Positive Postcard program. This is a program in which teachers mail hand-written letters to students and families praising student success.

Parents are active partners in the Response to Intervention process and in the decision making team. Parents help examine assessment results and provide their own anecdotal data on the child's learning habits at home. In addition, parents are kept informed regarding their child's assessment results and progress through interims, daily student agendas, and marking period report cards. Parents are also on key committees in which data is analyzed and disseminated. For example, parents are on the PBS Core Committee where discipline data is discussed and decisions are made based upon that data. Parents participate with the PBS Target Team in looking at behavioral data for their child and making decisions on a behavior plan for their child. Utilizing multiple means of communication with all stakeholders (students, parents, and the community) helps to promote Gallaher's past and future success in educating all students.

4. **Sharing Success:**

The successes at Gallaher School are shared with the community, parents, and other members of the school district in a variety of ways. First, Gallaher prominently displays banners and other awards earned each year for our success as a Delaware “Superior School” on state tests, as a “PBS Star School”, and as a National Distinguished Title I school. State test scores are published in the Delaware News Journal; Gallaher is always ranked within the top ten schools in the state of Delaware and number one in the Christina School District. Gallaher has also been recognized at public School Board Meetings for its high academic achievements for all students. Successes are shared with parents through PTA Meetings, the school website, the Panther Press monthly newsletter, and positive community word of mouth. For example, when parents come to register they consistently say, “I heard this was a really good school”. This is also validated by the fact that 120 out of our 480 students have chosen to come to Gallaher through the State School Choice program. Our successes have been shared across the district through multiple professional development sessions. For example, the District ELA coach has modeled a reading program in other elementary schools after Gallaher’s successful reading program. Other district administrators have expressed interest in replicating our reading intervention program. Our teachers have also been invited to district level curriculum meetings to discuss teaching strategies that Gallaher has used successfully. As a result of our consistent success, teachers from other schools have spent time at Gallaher observing our faculty.

In the event we were awarded Blue Ribbon School status, we would share this success with the entire Gallaher community, including parents, students, community members, and district personnel. We would continue to have an open dialogue with other educators from the district and the state to share our innovative approach to educating all children. In the event we are honored to be named a Blue Ribbon School, it would further validate the hard work of our parents, students, and staff.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Curriculum:

The curriculum at the Robert S. Gallaher Elementary School is based upon three principles: alignment with the Delaware Content Standards, connection and application to the real world and differentiation of assignments.

Reading/ELA - The core of the school day is the Reading/ELA block. All students receive 120 minutes of daily reading instruction and 45 minutes of daily writing instruction. The reading curriculum is a balanced literacy approach of decoding/word study, fluency and comprehension (oral & written). The curriculum is segmented into *before reading*, *during reading*, and *after reading strategies*. With this structure, students are using graphic organizers, written responses, rubrics, fluency games, making words activities, etc. to reinforce or instruct fluency, decoding/word study and comprehension. Students receiving special education services are mainstreamed into the whole group reading and writing lessons. A special education teacher comes into the classroom for small group reading. The regular education and special education teachers are using a variety of reading materials: Houghton-Mifflin Reading Anthology, Houghton-Mifflin Leveled Readers, SOAR To Success, and the SRA direct instruction program. Through a variety of make & take workshops during faculty meetings, teachers create literacy centers to support the tenants of balanced literacy. To supplement non-fiction, the teachers use the Write Time for Kids Kits and Benchmark Education's "Book Room" Collections. Technology is integrated into the reading/ELA block through targeted websites (such as starfall.com) and research skills (using web quests to preview or enrich anthology stories or core content).

Mathematics – All students receive 70 minutes of daily mathematics instruction. This is divided into 10 minutes of a daily practice problem and 60 minutes of whole group instruction. Using a constructivist approach, the mathematics curriculum focuses on *numeric reasoning*, *algebraic reasoning*, *geometric reasoning*, *quantitative reasoning*, *problem solving*, *reasoning & proof*, *communication*, and *mathematical connections*. The teachers are using the Math Trailblazers program which has been endorsed by the National Science Foundation. The students are actively engaged in the TIMS method to explore mathematical concepts and solve problems with pattern blocks, base-ten blocks, geoboards, tangrams and many other manipulatives. The units culminate with math labs where the students work in cooperative groups to solve real-world problems. Writing has been incorporated into the math curriculum with targeted two-point and four-point written response items. Technology is integrated into the math curriculum with extensive calculator use starting in the first grade. The students also use computers programs, software, and websites to enhance mathematics instruction.

Science/Social Studies – The students receive 45-minutes of social studies or science each day. The units are divided into three week units. The social studies curriculum focuses on *civics*, *geography*, *economics* and *history*. The units are specially designed by the Christina School District. They are not textbook driven; they are hands-on units with a culminating transfer task. The students are exposed to content through simulations, trade books, primary sources and field experiences. Both the social studies and science focuses on a constructivist approach to learning. In science, there are not textbooks for materials but Smithsonian and Foss Science Kits. The students use the scientific method to conduct investigations into the *Nature & Application of Science & Technology*, *Materials & their Properties*, *Energy & Its Effects*, *Earth in Space*, *Earth's Dynamic Systems*, *Life Processes*, *Diversity & Continuity of Living Things* and *Ecology*. The science kits directly align with the state science standards. Writing is critical in both subject areas. The students journal about their experiences, write research reports and complete text-based writing prompts.

The related arts – The related arts are an essential part of the school experience. The students have one the following subjects for their daily 55-minutes related arts block: art, music, physical education, library and computers. All students experience each related arts subject by the end of the week. Each related arts area has

their own curriculum based upon their respective state standards and integrate into the core content areas. The related arts period is designed to be highly interactive and expose the students, in depth, into their domains. The related arts curriculum also has strong connections into real-world experiences. Each related arts area has a performance piece: art show (art), chorus (music), track & field day (physical education), research project (library) and integrated unit of study (technology).

2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:

(This question is for elementary schools only)

Gallaher uses a blended approach to literacy that highlights comprehension, word study/decoding and fluency. Our school-wide master schedule ensures that each student receives 120 minutes of daily reading instruction which is broken into four 30-minute blocks: whole group instruction, flexible small group, literacy centers and meaningful seatwork. The Christina School District purchased the Houghton-Mifflin Reading series for whole and small group instruction. The series includes an anthology for whole group and leveled readers for small group instruction in the homeroom. Grade level teachers meet weekly to collaborate and plan for their three guided reading groups.

As determined by DIBELS, MAP and previous DSTP scores, at-risk students are given scaffolded reading instruction in targeted areas of concern. These students receive a double-dose of small group instruction during the reading block in lieu of centers. These services are provided by a certified reading specialist and a team of retired educators. Students needing the most help receive Tier 3 services (30 minutes daily/5 days per week – group size is limited to 3-5 students). Students approaching the benchmark qualify for Tier 2 services (30 minutes daily/4 days per week – group size is limited to 5-8 students). All students in these tiers are progress monitored weekly; this data is reviewed every 6 weeks to evaluate placement. Tier 3 utilizes the acceleration model for “catching kids up” in reading. Tier 2 concentrates on the twelve most frequently tested comprehension strategies and written response. This model is used in all grades with modification in kindergarten to fit the half-day schedule.

The core reading program and the intervention model have provided solid testing results and a significant decrease in grade level retentions. For example, 91% of the Tier 2 students in grades 2-5 met or exceeded the standard on the Spring 2009 Reading DSTP. 80% of Tier 3 students met or exceeded the standard on the same assessment. Gallaher’s reading curriculum has resulted in student gains in all skill/topic areas including but not limited to reading comprehension.

3. Additional Curriculum Area:

Research substantiates that reading and writing are inextricably linked. Students who can write on grade level can read on grade level. At Gallaher School, students write daily in all subject areas, especially during the 120-minute reading block. However, our students receive additional 45-minutes of daily writing instruction that focuses on composition, not penmanship. Part of our school’s mission is to challenge our students academically and provide opportunities for creative expression. Since writing is a life-long skill and the gateway to higher education, we teach the writing process to every student. Beginning in kindergarten, students become familiar with the Six-Traits Plus One writing philosophy. Students are given experiences to write persuasively, expressively and informatively. A holistic rubric is used for both teachers and students to assess writing pieces. As the students navigate through the writing process (brainstorming/graphic organizer, rough draft, one on one conference, revision/editing and publishing/final copy) they become proficient in organization, details, word choice, sentence fluency, voice and mechanics. Since writing is the ultimate transfer task, students are exposed to text based writing. This requires the students to read grade level passages and synthesize information into a cohesive writing piece. Since part of the Six Traits philosophy is the presentation of writing, we recognize our outstanding writers each month at the author of the month luncheons. Each classroom selects one student to publish and display a writing piece which is then shared with other students at the monthly luncheon. Gallaher parents endorse our extensive writing focus by

financially supporting the author's luncheon. The writing curriculum promotes Rick Stiggins' seven strategies of assessment for learning:

1. Provide a clear and understandable vision of the learning objective
2. Use examples and models of strong and weak work
3. Offer regular descriptive feedback
4. Teach students to self-assess and set goals
5. Design lessons to focus on one aspect of quality at a time
6. Teach students focused revision
7. Engage students in self-reflection and let them keep track and share their learning (in a portfolio)

A 2003 study by the US Department of Education identified five specific practices in instruction that are critical in raising achievement and reducing the achievement gap. One of the main pillars was "writing across all subject areas." This was to include teaching of all types of writing, with an emphasis on writing to inform, systematic teaching of writing composition in grades K-12 and systematic assessment of written composition in grades K-12. Gallaher School steadily increases student achievement because composition writing is part of the core curriculum.

4. Instructional Methods:

Gallaher is a diverse community with diverse learners. The hallmark of Gallaher is being able to meet the needs of many different types of learners. The key to our success is being able to constantly utilize small group instruction without interrupting regular classroom instruction. At the core of the student day is the two-hour reading block. This is segmented into four distinct 30-minute sections: whole group instruction, guided reading group, literacy centers and meaningful seatwork. Students who are in need of extra reading support are given an additional 30 minutes of small group reading instruction during the literacy center block every day. On the other end of the spectrum, students who excel at reading are pulled for Enrichment Services during the literacy centers and meaningful seatwork blocks three days a week. Based upon the ACCESS test for English Language Learners, students are pulled for the literacy centers block for individual tutoring with a bi-lingual specialist. Students' individual needs are being met without compromising grade level whole group reading instruction and their leveled guided reading group.

In mathematics, students receive opportunities for enrichment or intervention. This is accomplished with pull-out programs throughout the school day. The bilingual specialist also works with ELL students for mathematics support. All teachers have been trained in the First in Math computer based program. This is an essential part of supplementing the mathematics curriculum to meet grade level standards.

Finally, the faculty has had extensive training on differentiated instruction during the 2005-2006 school year. Through this model, teachers learned how to differentiate assignments by designing instruction to meet multiple tiers of ability and providing students with choice in demonstrating their learning. Differentiated instruction has helped to engage all students in the learning process and higher self-efficacy. This has also translated into more students moving up in performance levels on the state test.

5. Professional Development:

The Gallaher staff is in charge of their professional growth and development. It is driven by the four key priorities established yearly by the staff. This year they are:

1. Continue using “best practices” in the execution of daily guided reading groups.
2. Streamline the implementation of response to Intervention (RtI).
3. Integrate current technology practices into the daily teaching routine & instruction.
4. Promote a positive school culture for all the Gallaher stakeholders.

Twice a month the staff meets to learn best practices in reading comprehension strategies. For example, staff learned DRTA, Coding the Text and Reciprocal Teaching, reviewed Bloom’s Taxonomy and developed make-n-take literacy centers, etc. The staff has also explored using blogging with students and technological resources (Thinkfinity.org, FirstinMath.com, etc.). The first part of every Faculty Meeting is spent writing “positive parent postcards,” personal notes that share students’ classroom accomplishments.

Gallaher’s professional development has led to maintaining our high test scores and to moving students up in performance levels. For example, by focusing on reading comprehension in the primary grades, Gallaher K-1 DIBELS scores were the in the Christina School District. 92% of kindergarteners met benchmark on the Spring 2009 DIBELS and 87% of 1st graders met benchmark. Our professional development also positively impacted our 3rd and 5th grade reading scores on the DSTP. 66% of students from the third and fifth grades respectively, who met the standard the previous year, exceeded the standard in 2009. By prioritizing professional development as outlined above, the Gallaher staff has been able to develop activities that enhance student learning and that are aligned with content standards.

6. School Leadership:

Our school has a traditional leadership structure with a principal and dean of students; however, there are many opportunities for shared decision-making and teacher leadership. The main goal of the principal is to be an instructional leader by continually focusing on student achievement. This is possible because of the support of the dean of students, teacher-led committee structure and PTA.

The dean of students provides logistical support for the administration and, for the staff, provides classroom behavior intervention. The dean coordinates the Response to Intervention (RtI) behavior program with the PBS target team, school counselor, school psychologist, staff and parents. She also works with the PBS core team to enhance our PBS program and the PTA for PTA-sponsored events such as the assemblies and monthly author’s luncheon. Her role allows the staff and administration to focus on student achievement rather than classroom and school management.

Teacher-led committees allow for shared decision-making and input relating to procedures and academic direction. This allows teachers to focus on the skills and strategies necessary to address the specific behavioral and academic needs of each child. Thus, the success of each child is insured. Examples of teacher-led committees are the PBS Core Team, PBS Target Team, the SSP (School Success Plan), PLCs (Professional Learning Communities) and team leaders. In addition, there are content chairpersons who attend monthly district meetings for math, language arts, science, social studies and technology. The content chairs are at the forefront of leading curricular changes and innovations within the district. High levels of teacher involvement and leadership enhance student achievement.

PTA involvement at Gallaher is unique in that it works closely with all staff members. It provides financial and volunteer assistance for all school activities such as school pictures, book fairs, field trips, PBS celebrations, school store, educational assemblies and evening programs. This degree of involvement allows teachers and administrators to focus on student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 2 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period

Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	89	95	94	0
% Advanced	64	59	55	48	0
Number of students tested	78	96	107	87	0
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	86	95	89	
% Advanced	63	49	58	46	
Number of students tested	57	43	45	37	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	87	93	95	
% Advanced	58	47	32	26	
Number of students tested	31	38	28	19	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93		94		
% Advanced	67		78		
Number of students tested	15		18		
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced			80		
% Advanced			20		
Number of students tested			15		
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Second Grade did not begin participating in the State Mathematics Test (DSTP) until the 2005-2006 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 2 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period

Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	95	86	89	0
% Advanced	56	44	43	52	0
Number of students tested	72	90	101	82	0
Percent of total students tested	92	96	100	99	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	93	90	78	
% Advanced	56	35	41	44	
Number of students tested	52	40	41	32	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	89	95	79	65	
% Advanced	50	34	39	29	
Number of students tested	28	38	28	17	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93		94		
% Advanced	47		53		
Number of students tested	15		17		
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Second Grade did not begin participating in the State Reading Test (DSTP) until the 2005-2006 school year.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	94	87	86	89
% Advanced	53	55	53	43	48
Number of students tested	92	104	83	91	108
Percent of total students tested	100	97	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	94	80	83	89
% Advanced	45	45	51	35	43
Number of students tested	53	47	35	40	37
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	91	91	72	88	88
% Advanced	35	30	41	25	40
Number of students tested	34	33	22	25	26
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		94		61	
% Advanced		78		31	
Number of students tested		18		18	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		73			
% Advanced		32			
Number of students tested		15			
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	95	91	94	93
% Advanced	56	47	54	49	44
Number of students tested	87	93	78	82	99
Percent of total students tested	95	87	94	100	92
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	95	91	89	91
% Advanced	52	55	53	51	75
Number of students tested	48	42	32	37	32
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	95	82	95	95
% Advanced	44	32	36	43	48
Number of students tested	34	28	22	23	23
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced		95		73	
% Advanced		76		33	
Number of students tested		17		15	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period

Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	92	87	89	85	0
% Advanced	43	51	53	37	0
Number of students tested	108	76	88	104	0
Percent of total students tested	99	96	100	100	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	93	90	86	85	
% Advanced	40	48	57	38	
Number of students tested	57	31	35	39	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	72	87	82	
% Advanced	24	28	39	41	
Number of students tested	29	18	23	28	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	88			94	
% Advanced	56			31	
Number of students tested	25			16	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	86				
% Advanced	29				
Number of students tested	21				
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fourth Grade did not begin participating in the State Mathematics Test (DSTP) until the 2005-2006 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period

Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	86	90	95	85	0
% Advanced	37	46	51	33	0
Number of students tested	97	71	79	100	0
Percent of total students tested	89	90	100	100	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	90	90	90	78	
% Advanced	39	37	55	19	
Number of students tested	49	30	31	37	
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	84	94	95	81	
% Advanced	32	38	45	19	
Number of students tested	25	16	20	26	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95			94	
% Advanced	52			50	
Number of students tested	23			16	
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fourth Grade did not begin participating in the State Reading Test (DSTP) until the 2005-2006 school year.

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95	95	0	0	0
% Advanced	51	65	0	0	0
Number of students tested	77	60	0	0	0
Percent of total students tested	100	95	0	0	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	94	95			
% Advanced	46	69			
Number of students tested	35	26			
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	95				
% Advanced	27				
Number of students tested	22				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fifth Grade did not begin in our building until the 2007-2008 school year.

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: DSTP

Edition/Publication Year: Month and Year of each Testing Period Publisher: Harcourt

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100	0	0	0
% Advanced	72	77	0	0	0
Number of students tested	72	52	0	0	0
Percent of total students tested	95	83	0	0	0
Number of students alternatively assessed					
Percent of students alternatively assessed					
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100	100			
% Advanced	69	74			
Number of students tested	32	23			
2. African American Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced	100				
% Advanced	63				
Number of students tested	19				
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
4. Special Education Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
5. Limited English Proficient Students					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					
6. Largest Other Subgroup					
% Proficient plus % Advanced					
% Advanced					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

Fifth Grade did not begin in our building until the 2007-2008 school year.